

South Street Seaport Museum,
236 Front Street
(Edward G. Faile Building)
New York City
New York County
New York

HABS No. NY-5680

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NY,
31-NY-5680,
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PHOTOGRAPH

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM
236 FRONT STREET
(Edward G. Faile Building)

HABS No. NY-5680

Location: 236 Front Street, corner of Peck Slip and Front Street,
New York, New York County, New York.

Present Owner: New York City; Lessee: South Street Seaport Museum.

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: Grocer Edward G. Faile built 236 Front Street between
1827 and 1828. Like many of the buildings in the Seaport,
236 Front Street has contained a variety of businesses
including a liquor store and fish market. The vacant
building is now part of the South Street Seaport Museum,
a group of stores, galleries and piers standing in close
proximity to high-rise office buildings in Lower Manhattan.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1827-28. In 1826, Edward G. Faile occupied 236 Front St., assessed at \$5,300. At that time the lot was leased to Faile by the City of New York. In 1827, a notation in the tax records says "Improving corner lot." By 1828 the building assessed to Edward G. Faile and Co. was valued at \$10,000 indicating that a new building replaced an earlier and smaller one.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building is built on Block 97W, Lot 32. Information for the following chain of title comes from the New York City Conveyance Records, Surrogate's Court.

November 17, 1840

Liber 408; p. 582
Mayor Aldermen and
commonalty of the
City of New York
to
Edward G. Faile

March 5, 1884

Liber 1780; p. 235
Edward G. Faile (Exr. of)
to
Simon Herman

May 13, 1884

Liber 2791; p. 245
Isaac B. Crane
to
Charles V. Faile

March 31, 1885

Liber 1870; p. 176
Simon & Amelia Herman
to
Sophia Mathias

October 11, 1902

Liber 74; p. 12
Edward and Mirian Mathias
to
Jacob)
Samuel)
Julius) Mathias
Joseph)
Louis)
Abram)
Lena Froelich)
Cecilia)
Robert) Mathias
Clara)

May 24, 1907

Liber 111; p. 283
Louis Mathias
to
Joseph Mathias

April 12, 1909

Liber 121; p. 228
Julius Mathias
to
Joseph Mathias

October 19, 1912

Liber 140; p. 398
Clara M. Muller
(formerly Mathias)
heir of
Sophie)
Jacob)
Abram) Mathias
Cecilia)
Lena Froehlich
to
Joseph Mathias

October 19, 1912

Liber 140; p. 397
Louis Mathias
to
Joseph Mathias

October 19, 1912

Liber 140; p. 396
Edward and Miriam Mathias
to
Jacob)
Samuel)
Julius)
Joseph) Mathias
Louis)
Abram)
Cecilia)
Clara and Lena Froehlich

October 19, 1912

Liber 139; p. 388
Samuel Mathias
heir of
Robert Mathias
Devisee of
Sophia Mathias
Henriette Mathias
to
Joseph Mathias

July 21, 1921

Liber 3228; p. 421
Joseph Mathias
to
Edward G. Ryan

July 25, 1921

Liber 3234; p. 307
Edward G. Ryan
to
Philip J. Begloff
and
Charles F. Mischler

May 17, 1926

Liber 3553; p. 13
Charles F. Mischler
and Philip J. Begloff
to
Begloff Fish Co. Inc.
(Lease)

May 17, 1926

Liber 3553; p. 11
Charles F. Mischler
and Philip J. Begloff
to
Mischler Fish Co. Inc.
(Lease)

December 1, 1961

Liber 7447; p. 89
Philip J. Begloff
(Estate of)
Release of Lien N.Y.S. tax

December 13, 1961

Liber 7997; p. 115
Charles F. Mischler
(Estate of)
Release of Lien N.Y.S. Tax

June 20, 1973

Liber 282; p. 694
South Street Seaport Museum
to
City of New York

June 20, 1973

Liber 282; p. 814
City of New York
to
South Street Seaport Museum
(Lease)

4. Original plan and construction: An 1879 view called "Panorama of New York, Brooklyn and Vicinity" shows 236 Front Street before its 1884 alteration. The corner building was four and a half stories tall with a steep hipped roof. A canopy wraps around the first story level.
5. Alterations and additions: The first recorded alteration of 236 Front Street took place in 1884. Herman Mathias hired S. M. Marshall, architect, and William C. Rath, builder, to make a full story of the attic by converting the peak roof into a flat one. At the same time the front wall on Front Street was shored up because the first through second floors were bulging. In addition, cast iron piers and cornice replaced the Federal style wooden elements. Inside, they added a new floor and ceilings. A partition made the store floor into two stores.

In 1921, new owners Charles F. Mischler and Philip Begloff, fish merchants, hired architect Charles M. Straub to do a \$2,000 alteration on the Peck Slip facade. Part of the front wall in the first story was removed.

B. Historical Context:

1. The land on which 236 Front Street stands was one of the last city-owned waterlots. On February 19, 1821, William Woodhull, Lessee of Lot No. 32 Peck's Slip, filed a petition with the Common Council "praying permission to assign said Lot to Edward Faile." Permission must have been granted because grocer Edward G. Faile paid taxes at Front and Peck Slip in 1822. In 1827, when Faile built the present 236 Front Street, he wanted to buy the two lots on the corner of Peck Slip and Front Street but no decision was made; he was not permitted to buy the property until 1840. Scoville characterizes Faile as a celebrated grocer in The Old Merchants of New York. Faile's grocery business, like many others on the Seaport, complemented the Fulton Market which had opened on the next block in 1822.

- 2, When Herman Mathias altered the building in 1884, it was a hotel and liquor store. In 1921, when Charles F. Mischler and Philip Begloff bought the building, they used it as two separate fish markets.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

See accompanying HABS photograph of the structure for a visual observation.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early views:

An 1879 print called "Panorama of New York, Brooklyn and Vicinity," Published by Wittemann Brothers, New York; From the Prints and Photographs Collection, Library of Congress.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

New York City Conveyance Records, Surrogate's Court.

New York City Tax Records; Municipal Archives, 23 Park Row.

New York City Department of Buildings, Municipal Building, Alteration Applications #687 (1884); #1943 (1921).

Insurance Maps of the City of New York, 1857-1976, New York Historical Society.

Roberts, Lee and Steinke, Nancy, "Inventory of Structures in the Brooklyn Bridge S.E. Urban Renewal Area," New York: Landmarks Preservation Commission, May 1968, p. 12.

Rosebrock, Ellen, "South Street Seaport Historic District," New York: Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1974, p. 25.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Minutes of the Common Council, 1784-1831. New York: The City of New York, 1917, Vol. 12, p. 206, 485; Vol. 14, p. 649.

Scoville, Joseph A. alias Barrett, Walter. The Old Merchants of New York. New York: Carleton Pub., 1862, Vol. V, p. 259.

Prepared by: Lori Zabar
HABS Project Historian
Summer 1976

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The South Street Seaport project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, with the co-operation of the South Street Seaport Museum, Inc. Recording was carried out during the summer of 1976 by Frederick W. Wiedenmann (HABS Washington, D.C. office) project supervisor; Lori Zabar (Columbia University), project historian; Robert Lee Wiltse (Louisiana State University), architect; and student architects- Barry Lee Gill (North Dakota State University), Joe E. Price (Texas Tech University), and John R. Temmink (University of Virginia). Susan McCown, a HABS historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written data in 1983, for transmittal to the Library of Congress. Walter Smalling, Jr. of the National Park Service took the photographs of the South Street Seaport structures.